



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

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**RHODE ISLAND RENEWABLE ENERGY COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING**

September 28, 2012

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM

Department of Administration, One Capitol Hill, Conference Room C

Public Transportation Options: The Department of Administration is
served by RIPTA Bus Routes 56 and 57.

AGENDA

WELCOME (Chairman Richard A. Licht)

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Licht at 9:30 AM.

Board Members in attendance:

Janet Coit, Director, Department of Environmental Management

Grover Fugate, Executive Director, Coastal Resources Management Council

Marion Gold, Administrator, Office of Energy Resources

Chairman Richard Licht, Director, Department of Administration

William (Bill) Parsons, Acting Director, Economic Development Corporation

Advisory Council Members in attendance:

Doug Sabetti, Frank Epps, Bob Chew, Michelle Mulchay, Robert Tormey, Seth Handy,
Teresa Crean, Bruce DiGennaro, Karina Lutz, Bill Ferguson

Others in attendance:

Chris Kearns, Hannah Morini, Roland Moulin, Paul Raducha, Vito Buonomanu, Michelle
Carnevale, Danny Mushner, Eric Offenberger, Tim Faulkner, Barbara Cesaro, Paul
Gonsalves, Allison Rogers

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chairman Licht asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 29th
Renewable Energy Coordinating Board (RECB) meeting. Grover F. made a motion to
approve the minutes. It was seconded by Marion G. and passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

Vito Buonomano said that he has been to a number of renewable energy (RE) meetings
recently and he wanted to bring the Board's attention to a Massachusetts report that deals
with employment related to clean energy. His concern is that the RI RE portfolio is not
diverse enough. Too much attention is paid to large RE projects and not enough to

smaller residential projects. This report says if you want to create clean energy jobs you need to focus on smaller projects. In Massachusetts, most of the work was done by companies with 5-10 employees. There are about 72,000 people in Massachusetts employed in clean energy with a 50-50 split between RE & energy efficiency (EE). Over 5000 new clean energy companies were started. The large RE projects that have been discussed at RECB meetings do not help unemployment in RI. Chairman Licht said that one of the purposes of the Distrubted Generation legislation was to allow for smaller projects.

Marion Gold said that the Office of Energy Resources (OER) is planning to conduct a similar study of the RE job situation in RI. That will provide baseline metrics that can be used going forward.

APPOINTMENT OF ADDITIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Chairman Licht said that the RECB has to approve two new RE Advisory Committee members. Bill Parsons of the EDC made a motion to approve Michelle Mulcahy of Smart Energy Capitol and Frank Epps of rTerra as new members of the RE Advisory Committee. It was seconded by Janet C. and passed unanimously. These are EDC's nominations for the Advisory Council.

SCHEDULED BOARD MEETING DATES/TIMES FOR THE NEXT 3 MONTHS

Marion G. said that the next RECB meeting will be held on October 30th from 9:00-10:30 in Conference Room B. On November 27 at 9:00 AM in Conference Room B (please note: this room has been updated to Room 300 at the Department of Environmental Management, 235 Promenade St., Providence, RI 02908) there will be a joint meeting between the RECB and the Energy Efficiency & Resource Management Council (EERMC). The last RECB meeting for the year will be held on December 19th at 9:00, also in Conference Room B.

PRESENTATION BY THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND RENEWABLE ENERGY SITING PARTNERSHIP TEAM

Teresa Crean from the University of Rhode Island was introduced to give this presentation. Jennifer McCann from the URI Coastal Institute said that RI municipalities were looking for more info on siting RE projects. Ken Payne invited URI to work on this to provide municipalities with the tools necessary to make better RE decisions. This work has been complete and the result is the RESP. Teresa C. will now provide its recommendations to help the state and municipalities make better decisions. The RESP team included: URI's College of Environment & Life Science, URI's Graduate School of Oceanography, the URI Energy Center and the URI Coastal Resources Center/RI Sea Grant. The work of the RESP is also closely coordinated with RI Statewide Planning's Wind Advisory Council.

Teresa C. then presented a powerpoint on the RESP (attached) that summarizes the research. These findings include a resource assessment of the RI landscape that deal with wind, hydropower and landfill solar resources in RI. It looked at development constraints and opportunities pertaining to wind that looked at siting issues such as acoustics, avian issues and shadow flicker. They also did a special work session on property values. The RESP provides data and tools for energy planning in RI. The website RIenergy.org

provides a one-stop process for municipalities to get state-specific energy data to support outreach, education, research, and decision making.

RI energy.org is Rhode Island's clearing house for energy data, resource mapping, and siting tools for citizens, businesses and government officials. It has Rhode Island energy data on electric consumption & generation. The RESP provides technical assistance for the following areas: with wind projects by providing siting guidelines and an online siting tool; for hydro by employing a continuation of the integrated watershed approach for new proposals; and for large solar by providing guidance on RFPs, using a Massachusetts model. There is a need for ongoing technical assistance for municipalities. Further siting research is needed on property value impacts.

Outreach included: nine stakeholder meetings; nine municipal working group meetings and four public workshops. They also sponsored RI Renewable Energy Day in March. There were also two hydro workshops. In all, 300 comments were received during the 60 day public comment period with the majority coming from the Statewide Planning (SWP) Wind Advisory council members. There was concern with liability from turbine failure. There were also requests for additional research on property values.

Chairman Licht asked how the RESP proposes assessing property value impacts. The RESP held a recent workshop on property values. If funding is available two URI resource economics professors, with twenty years of purchase & sales data, could do a study on the property value changes of wind turbines over the last fifteen years. Chairman Licht said if there are no turbines that have been in existence for fifteen years the data is irrelevant. He wonders how you would assess the impact. Grover F. said that it could be difficult to get at that because some of the older technologies did have problems and you may see a decline in property values because of this. Bob Chew said that the concerns of abutters are always addressed during zoning board reviews. Karina Lutz said the purpose of the RESP is to avoid property value impacts. She would rather see any additional funding spent on a climate plan. She also said that the RECB should set a goal for RE like the 20% Former Governor Carcieri proposed.

RE Advisory Board member Bob Tormey wanted to give kudos to the fine work of the RESP. They did a great job of taking diverse opinions, some factual, some not, and addressing all of it without making anyone feel out of place in the process. Chairman Licht agreed and said the presentation he received was top notch. Marion G. also said that Department of Energy was also impressed with the RESP work during a recent State Energy Plan presentation.

UPDATE FROM THE OFFICE OF ENERGY RESOURCES ON THE DRAFT RI WIND TURBINE SITING GUIDELINES AND NEXT STEPS

Marion G. was introduced to give a powerpoint presentation. She said that the next step is for the RESP team and the OER to work on a Comprehensive State Energy Plan (CSEP) for which a detailed scope of work and timeframe has been developed and is under review. It will be discussed in full at the October RECB meeting. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has recently been executed with the RI Division of Statewide Planning (SWP) that designates the OER as the lead agency in this process. OER has been working with Paul Gonsalves and Nancy Hess of the Division of Planning in this

process. When the CSEP is completed it will be reviewed by the Statewide Planning Technical Committee and the Statewide Planning Council for formal adoption as part of the State Guide Plan. The last CSEP was approved in August 2002. The team will also work closely with the National Association of State Energy Offices to review best practices from other states.

As far as the wind guidelines are concerned, Rhode Island is not alone in this endeavor. Marion G. has been communicating with a colleague in Massachusetts who is organizing a Regional Workshop, with National Energy Lab funding, titled "Injecting Useful and Credible Information into Wind Power Siting." Rhode Island will co-sponsor and send a delegation to this event, which will be held on October 26th at Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner, Massachusetts

The next steps are to evaluate the impact of the draft wind siting guidelines on the 11 existing wind turbines in the state. Chris K. proposed a project to gather acoustic data of the existing wind turbines installed in the state, and compare the results with the proposed decibel level setbacks in the drafted wind siting guidelines. Wind siting guidelines will eventually be incorporated into the CSEP. The acoustic study work will begin in early 2013.

Eric Offenbergh of Wind Energy Development asked about how the document will be represented by the State now that it is out there in draft form. Once a document is in the public realm you will get questions. Chairman Licht said that when you operate in the public realm you can not do things by fiat, there is a procedure. You have to put out a draft so people can comment. If someone wants to use the guidelines, you respond by saying they are just draft guidelines and have not been adopted yet. The concern is that they will be viewed as regulations and a standard that has to be met. It was noted that 300 comments is a significant amount of public comments to receive. He likes Chris' idea of looking at how the drafted wind siting guidelines stack up against existing wind turbines installed in the state.

Grover F. asked if Rhode Island was looking to see what Maine and Massachusetts, who have taken significant steps in wind development, are doing about siting guidance. Paul Gonsalves said that SWP had looked at multiple guidelines from other states and also overseas. Seth Handy said that a key difference between Rhode Island and those states is density. This makes siting in Rhode Island more challenging. He also said it is important to get to the next steps in the process because delays could increase the pricing in the Distributed Generation (DG) program because it is limited to solar. Chairman Licht has voiced the same concern.

PRESENTATION BY BOB CHEW ON RI SOLAR LICENSING CHALLENGES

RE Advisory Board Member Bob Chew was introduced to give this presentation. He cited the goals of the RI Small Business Economic Summit. One of the goals is to adopt a Rhode Island solar license program similar to Connecticut's. This would allow more companies to install RE projects in Rhode Island and allow more people to be employed as RE installers. It would also ensure that the work done meets industry standards. The reason solar licensing is needed is because of RI Public Law 5-6-2 which stipulates that only licensed electricians can install photovoltaics (PV). Currently, companies cannot

install PV in Rhode Island unless they are an electrical contracting company. Janet C. asked for further clarification. Bob C. said that in order for an installer to be a licensed electrician it takes up to six years.

When Rhode Island closed down its solar program in 2006, his company was able to go into Connecticut, proof his company's competence, and get a solar license. Clearly, when doing interconnects, having an electrician license is necessary, but it is not needed to install the panels. Right now there is virtually no solar industry in Rhode Island. Chairman Licht asked if even the prep work needs to be done by an electrician. Yes, all the work, opening up the box and carrying the racks up to the roof needs to be done by an electrician. Bob C. said that every DG contract issued by National Grid is illegal by current Rhode Island law. Bob C. said that his company works all over the Northeast and that Connecticut has the best solar licensing program. He said that when he got his license he was the 6th company to get Connecticut approval. Now there are 50 companies in Connecticut and the solar industry is the fastest growing industry in the state. Those same companies could not come into Rhode Island to do PV work.

Doug Sabetti said that PV is a hard sell in Rhode Island as it is. He noted that if he has to hire \$65/hour electricians to screw racks to a roof, this will be a significant barrier to moving forward. Paul Raducha asked if he sold a DG project in Rhode Island, would it be legal. Bob C. said no, unless you are a master electrician. That means most of the people in the room cannot install PV. Bob C. said that even though he can do solar thermal because he is a master pipefitter, Rhode Island's regulations require that he get three permits. He said that Rhode Island's unfriendly business climate forced his solar company to move. The first question the State needs to ask when promulgating new regulation is: Will it hurt existing businesses that install RE in Rhode Island and will it prevent new businesses from coming in?

Chairman Licht asked Bob C. if anyone has introduced legislation modeled after Connecticut's. He replied that he has been in conversations with Senator Felag who is concerned about the number of solar jobs going to Massachusetts and Connecticut. Chairman Licht said that any legislation will need support from many different directions. Chairman Licht said he will raise this issue with the Governor's Policy Office. Recent General Assembly legislation requiring an economic impact statement for any new regulations has been accelerated by the Governor. This initiative has been moved to the Office of Regulatory Reform under Leslie Taito and Chairman Licht will speak to her about this issue. Bob C. said he had a recent meeting with the RI Department of Labor and they said they would back solar licensing legislation if the Governor and the OER are behind it.

Janet C. recommended that solar licensing legislation be on the agenda for the next meeting. Bob C. said he could volunteer the time to write the legislation. Chairman Licht said that Bob C. should get a draft bill to Chris K. before the October meeting and he will make sure it is on the agenda. Karina Lutz mentioned an OER initiative that tried to reform this but cannot recall the outcome. Danny M. mentioned an article about a German family who got a solar system installed and interconnected in eight days.

Vito B. asked if Bob C. recommends that solar companies be NABCEP (North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners) certified.

Bob C. said that Rhode Island needs certification that proves competency. Paul Raducha said that his home solar installation was done in three days, but it took forty-five days to get it interconnected. He then asked Bob C. about the timeline for getting solar licensing passed if everyone is on board. Chairman Licht said that such a bill would not pass until next June.

ADJOURN

Grover F. made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Janet C. and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 AM.